

## State Supervision and Private Agencies

REV. ROBERT F. KEEGAN

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STATE supervision of private agencies has always been a subject for discussion at State and National Conferences. This is not surprising because the question itself is one of large importance and there is much room for discussion. This arises from a disagreement, not as to the need of supervision, but as to the nature and extent of the supervision. When we come to determine policy, we enter the realm of political science and our policy inevitably falls in line with our political philosophy.

Those who hold to a philosophy of State paternalism and State autocracy are in favor of conveying to the State an absolute control, in fact in many cases an absolute and exclusive right to organize and operate all agencies of relief, of custody and correction. Others of this school, but less radical, sponsor the cause of private agencies but would put them definitely under the complete supervision and direction of the State. Desire for uniformity and a conviction that State control will mean greater efficiency would seem to be at least two of the reasons back of this position. Such men, however, fail to take into consideration the effectiveness with which social work is done by the majority of private workers and the actual limitations of governmental powers and efficiency, which is written large across history.

The other extreme group is composed of those who belong to the school of individualistic philosophy. They object to all State intervention as interference. Their convictions are derived from a realization of the evils attendant upon State paternalism, which they characterize briefly as a curtailment of efficiency and usefulness and an over-lordship which can readily slip into tyranny.

It would seem that the old saying of the schoolmen, *in medio stat virtus* conveys the true solution of the problem. The dangers of dominating legalistic control without due attention to the aims and rights of the private agencies are only too apparent. On the other hand, there exists no reason why State supervision should not be so organized and operated that it would prove of definite constructive value to private agencies. The ideal relation between the two forces should be one of joint partnership and sympathetic co-operation in the execution of a vigorous, thorough-going plan of action.

To secure this ideal relation there seems to be four pivotal principles in accord with which the whole question must be decided.

1. The right of the individual to engage singly or in co-operation with others in any line of activity that is pleasing to him and not harmful to others.

2. The right of the public at large to be protected against exploitation.

3. The right of the under-privileged and helpless to be protected against incompetent, careless or unfit guardians.

4. Men individually, or united in families, cannot reach that perfection of their physical, mental and moral well-being that is proper to them. Civil society is essential to supplement their efforts but it should never destroy private initiative. The State was made for man, and not man for the State.

Adequate supervision then, and not arbitrary control, should be the basis of the working relationship between the State authorities and the private organizations.

#### STATE SUPERVISION OF PRIVATE AGENCIES

In New York the powers of the State Board of Charities have been restricted to the supervision of public agencies and of private agencies receiving public funds, and the right to demand reports of admissions and discharges from child-caring agencies. This jurisdiction does not require discussion.

The New York State Board of Charities has taken the stand that it should be granted the further power to

supervise and inspect all private charities whether the recipients of public funds or not, and for the last few years, has annually introduced in the State Legislature, a bill embodying such provisions and has tried to obtain its enactment. Objection to this extension of State supervision arises mainly from private organizations which do not have the custody of their charges, such as family relief agencies. In the case of institutions having the custody of individuals, there is little objection to State supervision. Many private agencies in New York, non-custodial in nature and not the recipient of any public funds, do not believe that there exists any necessity for State supervision over their activities, and are of the opinion that it would prove undesirable.

#### ATTITUDE OF CATHOLIC AGENCIES

At the present time in the New York Diocese, all Catholic agencies and institutions are supervised by the Catholic Charities. Catholic agencies are entirely in sympathy with the present New York State policy of inspection of charitable agencies—a policy which respects their rightful autonomy. They welcome impartial, reasonable and wise inspection and supervision of all custodial agencies, whether or not they receive public funds. They desire to maintain their charitable work at the highest level of efficiency. It is their constant aim to bring to the service of their clients, the best known methods of scientific social treatment. Catholic agencies are always willing to join with the public authorities in formulating any comprehensive plan of co-operation which will safeguard the welfare of their charges and advance the best interests of society.

#### APPROVAL OF NEW VENTURES

One of the most difficult duties assigned to the State Board is the approval of the incorporation of new charitable ventures. In passing upon such proposals originating from religious groups, the Board can be greatly helped by the advice of a central diocesan organization. In the field of Catholic Charity no new activity can be started without the approval of the Bishop. The wisdom

of this policy has been evident where racial or fraternal groups desired to start new orphanages or other works which were either unnecessary or lacking in assurance of substantial support and capable management. For political or personal reasons, a public body might have hesitated to refuse the required authorization.

In other instances the work proposed may be necessary, but the plans and the location faulty. The State Board is more or less limited to a simple approval or disapproval of the project. The Diocesan Organization is able to work with the proposers in the selection of a better location and in the formulation of better plans. After this valuable preliminary work has been done, the State Board can then give consideration to the project.

Where objectives, plans and financing are acceptable, there may still remain in the mind of the Board, some doubt as to the ability, experience and trustworthiness of the individuals making the proposal. It is helpful in such situations to be able to call upon a central agency which is in a position to furnish reliable information.

#### ASSURANCE OF SOUND FINANCING

The financing of charities is also a matter of great concern. Yet, the State Board is not in a position to deal effectively with this problem. An organization may incur indebtedness upon indebtedness, until it is hopelessly insolvent, all without the knowledge or approval of the State Board. This situation cannot happen in the Catholic field where institutions are prohibited from contracting for a loan or mortgage without first securing the approval of the Diocesan authorities.

On the other hand, the Central Organization can secure increased borrowing power for any of its agencies and thus provide for the development of far-seeing undertakings. Bankers readily extend increased credit to charitable agencies which have the endorsement of the Diocesan authorities. In addition, the Diocesan Organization, from its general resources, can provide finances to meet emergent situations.

In the matter of appeals for funds, the Catholic agency has the benefit of the experience and counsel of the Diocesan Organization. Thus, inopportune, simultaneous

and conflicting appeals can be avoided, and methods that have proven wasteful, and professional organizers who have been inefficient or unreliable, can be eliminated. In New York City, Catholic Charities requires that every solicitor for Catholic charitable work shall secure a card of authorization from the Archbishop. This is a guaranty to the contributor of the worthiness of the appeal.

#### CO-OPERATION IN CARRYING OUT STANDARDS

For various reasons the supervision of the State Board is often limited to an annual inspection of premises and procedure. Following this inspection a list of recommendations is submitted to the agency. Often the State Board has no further contact with the institution until the next annual inspection. With Catholic agencies the Diocesan Organization may be the instrument to carry out these recommendations. Equipped with trained specialists, it is able to work with the officers of the institution and introduce the improvements suggested. These supervisors, for instance, may follow up a criticism of the dietary of an institution by formulating and putting into effect a standard dietary adjusted to its particular needs. Or again, the diocesan supervisors may install a standard system of social and financial records adapted to the requirements of the institution and see that they are properly utilized.

#### SUPERVISION OF AGENCIES NOT SUBJECT TO THE STATE BOARD

In New York the supervision of the Diocesan Organization frequently extends beyond State and City requirements. For example, the Departments of Health of the City and State are empowered to exact certain sanitary standards of day nurseries, summer camps and other organizations. But the many other important activities of these agencies are unsupervised by any public authority. The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, however, with 27 nurseries and 22 camps under its supervision, has not only met the regulations of the public authorities in matters of sanitation, but has formulated standards of medical care, nutrition, recreation, education

and policies of admission. The social values of this policy are obvious.

#### ORGANIZING FOR NEW NEEDS

With its knowledge of state-wide conditions, the State Board may often see a need for the establishment of new agencies or the discontinuance of old ones. To be able to present these problems to a central Diocesan Agency is often of great value and frequently results in an adequate adjustment of the situation. For example, the State Board recently brought to the attention of the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York that the great influx of colored people into New York City had created an urgent demand for additional child-caring facilities for children of this race. Serious consideration is being given to the marshalling of resources and the readjustment of present facilities so as to provide for this need.

#### STATE SUPERVISION SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE, NOT REPRESSIVE

Whatever program of State supervision and direction is formulated and put into effect, it should not have room in it for petty annoyance, unreasonable interference or arbitrary repression. Private philanthropic effort at the present time is bearing a very large proportion of the burden of remedial effort and indeed some of the most effective social work is being carried on by the private social agencies. Moreover, private agencies have contributed constructively to social advancement by experimenting with and demonstrating the value of some of the most significant forms of social work which later were taken over by public authorities. We cannot afford to discourage their experiments in untrodden fields or minimize their pioneer attempts to improve methods and procedure. Private agencies tap financial resources and draw on the enthusiastic support of personalities seldom available to public agencies. Such forces must not be diverted from the magnificent work of social betterment through enervating supervision by state authorities.

The supervisory policy of State Boards in regard to private agencies should be educational and persuasive. In

their work of inspection and in making their recommendations, they should be reasonable, sympathetic and impartial. They should endeavor to work *with* agencies and not against them. Their attitude should not be that of carping criticism or petty domination, but generous, broad-visioned and constructive.

### A SUGGESTED PLAN OF SOCIAL LEADERSHIP

A State Board of Charities composed of men and women of eminence, ability and vision might safely be trusted to assume the social leadership of the State. Such a leadership would bring together in conference the executives in social work, heads of important institutions, and other public spirited persons for the purpose of surveying the social work of the State. Investigation of divers problems might be delegated to the persons or agencies best equipped to conduct them. Intensive study might go far toward solving problems of duplication, co-operation, co-ordination, and would bring about an interchange of ideas and methods, and the formulation of standard policies of administration. Leaders and workers throughout the State, inspired by a program such as this, might be prevailed upon to accept an improved standard of service and pledge themselves to its attainment.

Supervision of private agencies carried on in such a spirit of helpfulness, with vision, with an understanding of difficulties, and with a consecration to the highest ideals of service to mankind and to God, will bring untold benefits, not only to the agencies and to their clients, but to all the people of the State.

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## The Social Mission of St. Dominic

MARGARET SHAW

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SOME years ago Prof. Stockley warned us of the immense tradition which, since the Reformation, has been slowly enveloping most of our academic studies. That remark, which threw into articulate form what many

historical students had already been vaguely thinking about their subject, seemed designed to give the right amount of shock to those who were inclined to accept at face value much of what passed for historical certitude. Since the days when that timely finger of warning was lifted, scores of Catholics have been forced to the conclusion that because of this all-pervasive atmosphere, they were, insensibly, becoming biased and timorous; that their historical judgment was in danger of becoming warped. They noted, too, that whole vistas of the past were as a closed book to them. Fortunately for the students who have already begun to think thus, new works are appearing from the pens of writers who have freed themselves from the trammelling influence of that tradition.

The Catholic conscience of Europe is slowly asserting itself, too slowly it would seem in view of the urgency of the need, for up to the present the work actually accomplished along these lines is limited in quantity and in variety. Perhaps the idea is too new; it may have to fight its way into general acceptance. Meantime, Catholics as a body should welcome every effort to dissipate intellectual prejudice. They have everything to gain by so doing. They will be struck into amazement when they see, outlined in bold relief, the services rendered by the Church in the colossal task of uprearing our European civilization. They will begin to appreciate these services so long thanklessly overlooked. And, greatest gain of all, they will be led to acquire a deeper sense of the qualities that differentiate our Catholic Graeco-Latin civilization from the great civilizations of the East. And this deeper sense of the value of our civilization will be followed by unexpected practical results in the social order, for it is only when people have a proper appreciation of that civilization that they can take intelligent steps to combat the influx of new ideas which claim to herald a newer culture, but which the Catholic conscience of Europe rejects, because they imply the negation of all that is of high value in the old. . . .

In this paper there is no question of elaborating this theme; it is too vast. But working within more defined limits, an attempt will be made to estimate the social mission of St. Dominic. There is still a prevailing tendency, which may indeed be an indirect consequence of the tra-



dition we alluded to, to limit the sphere of influence of the saints to the purely spiritual, to overlook the practical and social side of their missionary activity. In the case of St. Dominic it is, of course, impossible to dissociate the spiritual and the active side of that activity, for the active had its roots in the spiritual. Nevertheless, while being fully cognizant of this fact, we may claim to have accomplished something definite if we try to stress the quality of the service he rendered to the men of his day, or if we try to assess the value of his services in the cause of a civilization then seriously imperilled. By concentrating on this phase of his activities, we may come to regard St. Dominic as a figure more essentially important than many who monopolize the pages of our history texts. We may come to regard him as an incarnation of one of the forces that made the thirteenth century, from many points of view, the greatest of centuries; we may come to regard him as one whose name in truth will be "a light unto eternity."

A saint's life is shorn of much of its interest and significance if due regard be not paid to the accompanying human circumstances of time and place. Saints are not exceptions to the law of human solidarity: like men they are born into society at a given time, and under given social conditions, and these facts, necessarily, help to color and to shape their activity. In the case of St. Dominic, the links with his time are so intimate that it is particularly true to say that we have only adequately envisaged his achievements when we have adequately estimated the import of the social problems of his day.

St. Dominic, as we know, was born into the late twelfth century. Here, there is just a danger that we may allow ourselves to conceive of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as a prolongation of the centuries immediately preceding, as an epoch when the world was relatively at a standstill, as a time when customs and institutions had moulded themselves into forms of uninteresting solidity. The reverse is literally true, for Europe had now suddenly awakened. The Normans were already moving. Knights were arming for the Crusades. These centuries were, indeed, extremely full, palpitating, tumultuous even, while in the relative magnitude of the economic changes that were being then effected, they chal-

lenge comparison with the last decades of the nineteenth century.

In these decades the Industrial Revolution set before the eyes of astounded statesmen and citizens a totally new order of things. The introduction of mechanical power upset all previously existing economic arrangements. Legislators stood dumbfounded in face of these altered conditions. And when a Scotch economist advised them that the really philosophic way of dealing with the situation was to leave things alone, *laissez faire, laissez passer*, they clung grimly to that advice, and made that theory their political anchor for more than half a century. In other words, these statesmen abdicated, and allowed the merely material to dominate them.

Not thus acted those who molded opinion in the Middle Ages: such a solution would have seemed to them inconsistent with their dignity as human beings and as heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven. These medieval legislators and citizens had, too, their economic shocks, their rapid transitions in the economic domain, but right through these changes the material forces were kept well in hand. In consequence, we have to note that these statesmen, unlike their nineteenth century compeers, did not burden posterity with an acute and unsolved social problem. . . .

From the eleventh to the fourteenth century we have a sequence of these rapid changes manifesting themselves. Perhaps greatest of the forces productive of change was the spread of democratic ideas, ideas which bore fruit in the establishing of communes. The multiplication of these communes brought a new factor into medieval economy, for the commune soon sought to exercise an authority hitherto wielded by the nobility in their country demesnes. In outline, this successful attempt on the part of the communes to make themselves master in their own house, forms a sort of framework for the events we are about to discuss. But if we would have more than an academic knowledge of the revolutionary import of the movement, or of the problems it posed for solution, we must try to grasp intellectually the political and social circumstances in the midst of which the idea germinated.

In the ninth and tenth centuries the map of Europe

did not present the well-marked political divisions of a later day. The age of centralization of power had not yet arrived. Indeed, centralization would have been useless, for those were days of pirate raids, of sea-kings and plunderers who sped up every river in Europe more rapidly than a land army could have followed. Amid the plundering and the slaying, men went in daily terror for their lives. This was no time for Rousseau-like experiments in solitude. In desire for common security, men banded themselves in groups and lived within the formidable fortification of the moat and the drawbridge. The lord responsible for the providing of common protection had a place of honor; in him reposed all power and authority. It was admitted that he had an undeniable claim to certain services and dues, which he exacted from those whose safety of life and property he guaranteed. This is, in brief, an outline of the social organization designated as Feudalism. Like all other systems, it met the needs of a particular time, a time when men demanded not liberty but security.

But these ages of anarchy eventually came to an end. Christian ideals spread, and the Church taught men a respect for order and authority. As a consequence, the need for protection became less apparent. The feudal dues and services now became burdensome. A new spirit appeared. Men became conscious of their dignity as human beings. And when, under the auspices of the Church, they met together in their guilds and confraternities, they had already taken their first step on the path to political emancipation. The next step was to wrest from their overlord a formal recognition of their civic rights. This attempt did not progress calmly; it ran counter to too many vested interests for that. Very often force met force.

With the struggle at this point, the Pope launched his first appeal on behalf of the Crusade, and this unexpected circumstance singularly favored the democratic movement. Before setting out on this adventurous expedition the knight required money. The townspeople were wealthy, having garnered in money by their crafts and by their trade. What was more natural than that a bargain should be arranged between the needy knight and the wealthy vassals? It was not the time to drive a hard

bargain, for the chances were that the knight would never return to exercise his authority as suzerain. So the knight took what money he could get, and the townspeople wrung from him what rights he would concede. This contract was embodied in a "Charter." In this way the townspeople found themselves in possession of a newly won freedom.

Now, here was a new movement in full swing. Here were the communes or towns coming in as a new factor to upset all existing political and economic arrangements. Here were agglomerations of townspeople, a considerable substratum of whom possessed the qualities of all town populations; they were violent, ardent, restless, easily moved. Here was a population in the first flush of democratic triumph, a population avid of intellectual culture, a population flocking to the new universities then springing up. The question at once arises—is the Church prepared to cope with this new displacement of population? The Church had ever dispensed culture and learning; it had magisterially directed men at every crisis in history. Had it instruments now at its command, to meet the new social needs of the seething population in the new urban centers? Again, was learning safe in the hands of these far from timorous teachers who professed at the new universities?

These were but a few of the many problems that pressed forward for solution when St. Dominic was ready to face his life's work. Now, had he to deal with but one aspect of the problem, had he to cope with the intellectual side of the question and to deflect intellectual energy into safe channels, we should have been tremendously impressed with the magnitude of the task that Dominic set before him. But his task was far more complicated. The difficulties were heightened by the fact that just at that moment, European civilization itself was threatened with extinction.

It is difficult to conceive the idea of a civilization in peril. To civilized men the idea is appalling, for it connotes the shipwreck of the ideas and principles on which a social order is based. This, precisely, was what was threatened in the late twelfth century. But the poison penetrated slowly. And note how imperceptibly.

In many cases the townspeople had been seized with

disaffection for the Catholic hierarchy. Often the bishops had been feudal lords and had resisted the communal movement; often too, they seemed to have lost touch with the people, to have lacked an intuitive appreciation of the new popular needs. And this thirteenth century populace possessed reserves of spiritual energy unintelligible to us in these later days. The clergy seemed hardly cognizant of the social phenomenon under their eyes. In any case, the organization of the Church was so designed as to minister to the needs of a feudal Europe, and it would require time to adapt that organization to meet the new needs. Meantime the people seemed neglected; for all the spiritual energy there seemed no outlet. The dangerous point was now reached, for to men in this mental condition, false mysticism makes a powerful appeal.

Not unexpectedly, therefore, in these years, do we witness the multiplication of heretical sects who, at the psychological moment, endeavored to deflect the latent religious enthusiasm into quite unorthodox channels. Many of these sects did not co-ordinate their teaching into a body of doctrine, so their activities could only constitute a passing danger. But the Albigensians were more business-like. Borrowing their philosophic ideas from the East, they inculcated a code of morals that were so disruptive of our European civilization that the civil powers of the day saw themselves constrained to take action. Had Europe not rejected the poison, we might experience the consequences to this day.

This, then, was the complicated scheme of things within which St. Dominic had to work. It was amid these disheartening circumstances that he formulated his plans, and laid the foundations of a work that has endured to this day.

St. Dominic did not hastily make up his mind as to the remedies necessary to save an endangered religion and an imperilled civilization. Having spent from 1205 to 1217 in Languedoc, that hotbed of heresy, he slowly matured his plans. People must know their religion; their reason must be appealed to; their intelligence must be illuminated by knowledge, otherwise they may easily fall victims to the sophistry of the heretics. And how can people know their religion, unless there are those who are ready to teach them, unless there are those who are will-

ing to abandon the quietude of the monastery for the active apostolate in the surging university cities and in the towns? Two essentials of Dominic's scheme had already outlined themselves. Fortified by Papal approbation, he would found a new monastic Order, an Order of clerics, the special end of whose missionary activity should be the salvation of souls by preaching, that is to say, by the teaching of the Faith and the imparting of Truth through every medium that could reach the intelligences of the day. The foundation of such an Order would place at the disposal of the Church a mobile force of specially-trained and equipped priests, ready for immediate action at any point of Christendom where the integrity of the Faith was menaced.

Rome approved of the project. It seemed so marvellously adapted to the peculiar needs of the moment—an Order of educated clerics competent to defend intellectually the deposit of the Faith, an Order actually aiming at the salvation of souls through the instrumentality of preaching and teaching—an Order at the disposal of the Church, and free to operate in centers where the need was most pressing—it seemed to prove that in an hour of dire need God had come to the assistance of His Church. And there were other desirable results, to the consummation of which the Pope could look forward. When Honorius gave the seal of his approbation to this new Order, he must have endeavored to assess the spiritual and social results likely to be accomplished by the timely appearance of the mendicant friars, with their unfamiliar ideal of evangelical poverty. Their very appearance at this juncture would be certain to dispossess two of the heretical sects of their chief weapon, a poverty which they assumed with a view to throwing into prominence the wealth and luxury of the Catholic hierarchy. It must have seemed that at last the situation was in hand.

This method of handling a difficult problem may seem to many so simple, so obvious, as to be undeserving of the emphasis we accord it. As a matter of fact, every element of the scheme was new for the time. The very idea of an active monastic order was new; and, as to St. Dominic's methods, they were nothing short of revolutionary. To begin with, the appeal to the intelligence was something quite new. Up to this time, as Père

Boullay reminds us, Christian asceticism had relied principally on the will in the eternal struggle against evil. In this struggle the intelligence played a relatively small part. Doubtless this method of procedure was suited to a time when passions ran high, and when men were being initiated into the ways of civilization.

But the thirteenth century had marched beyond that point. In the towns, intelligences were active and wits were keen, men were questioning things, the new university professors were raising serious issues. Under these entirely new circumstances, should not the whole problem of moral formation be approached from quite a new angle? Should not the part played by the intelligence be increased? St. Dominic was convinced that it should. And it is because he was so convinced, and because he based his method of moral formation on this conviction, that he has been described as "the divinely-placed preceptor, set providentially on the broad road of humanity, to preside at the dawning intelligence of the society of the day—set to guide that intelligence in the serious crisis involved in the transition from intellectual infancy to adult maturity."

In this connection we need but allude to the educational schemes planned and realized by St. Dominic. He has been called with justice the "first Minister of Public Instruction in Europe." In every Dominican convent there was certain to be sheltered schools for theology and for philosophy. The establishment of these schools satisfied the most pressing educational need of the moment. They brought higher theological studies within the reach of the clergy, who, up to this, were deprived of facilities for the acquisition of this necessary knowledge. But the Preachers did not confine themselves to the science of theology; as the schools developed, the natural sciences came in for increasing attention. Is this social service to be overlooked because it involved no change in the political boundaries of Europe?

It would be interesting to examine the output of these Dominican houses of learning, in the domain of philosophy and of political science. To Europe, their translations from Aristotle and the consequent diffusion of Aristotelian thought was an event that took on an importance, as well political as intellectual. And there was

another angle too, from which the new Orders exercised an influence on contemporaneous political society. By their constitutions, broad-based on democratic ideas, the Franciscans and the Dominicans showed the world practical examples of applied democracy. They showed how the new power could be organized, and how democratic instruments could be satisfactorily handled. So important was this lesson in European political development, that modern historians have been constrained to admit that if they would trace the evolution of the theory of parliaments or the idea of representative government, they could not afford to overlook the social activity of the mendicant friars.

In our own times this political debt has been but grudgingly acknowledged if not actually overlooked, and this by the nations that have benefited most by the development of democratic institutions. But the men of the thirteenth century were more appreciative of the services rendered by the founders of the Mendicant Orders. They knew that in an age when few could discern their spiritual need, St. Dominic's mental gaze envisaged both problem and solution; they knew that he was vitally concerned in the salvation of their souls; they knew of his ceaseless activity in the confessional. He was the first to come among them in the midst of their busy town life; he was the first to teach them; he was the first to preach to them. And though these ordinary townspeople might not analyze the secret of this appeal, or appraise the ideas on which it was based, the sentiment of a common debt of gratitude persisted through the centuries—a gratitude that found a triumphant expression in masterpieces of the painter's art.

So Art, also, has its debt to St. Dominic.

Now, it would be quite wrong to confine St. Dominic's influence to the Middle Ages or to any other age in the world's history. The idea that inspired his work is eternal, and can be as fruitfully applied to-day as in the days of the thirteenth century. The modern world is faced with a problem that is analogous in many respects to the problem of St. Dominic's day. Our European civilization is once again imperilled. In the movement of ideas, on the political as on the literary plane, we can perceive the infiltration of dangerous elements—in literature, a



sensualism, an indifference, an Eastern mysticism. Unfortunately, we are not free from contamination in Ireland; the battle has already opened. And how can the evil be met? By adopting methods first consciously applied by St. Dominic, and later philosophically expounded by St. Thomas—in a phrase, by a return to Thomism. How can our youth be expected to assess the import of principles, if they have no objective standards at their command? And how can they possess themselves of objective standards, unless their intelligences are confronted with a co-ordinated body of Christian teaching?—with Thomism.

## Social Service and Catholic Charity

*Reprinted from the Catholic "Standard and Times"*

THE annual Conference of Catholic Charities was a demonstration of the application of scientific social work to the activities of Christian charity. Without losing sight of the supreme importance of the Christian motive, which should actuate our services for our neighbor as evidencing our endeavor to live out the second great commandment of the law that we love our fellows as ourselves, there is much in the technique of modern social service, which will give efficiency to our work for our less fortunate brethren, if we do not allow it to kill the spirit of Christian charity that should animate all Catholic action for the relief of want and suffering.

In the opening chapter of Chesterton's "Orthodoxy," the author represents a man en route for distant seas being driven off his course back to the shores of England. Ignorant of his latitude and longitude, but imagining himself near the savage lands, which were his goal, he lands armed to the teeth and talking in sign language, only to find that the supposed barbarous coast is the well-known shore of Brighton. So Chesterton, having thought out a system of philosophy and religion which he believed entirely new, comes to discover that it is the age-old teaching of the Church. Social welfare workers devising new plans for human betterment often imagine that they are

making new discoveries, when in reality the systems, which they suppose are of to-day, are of many yesterdays.

We read of Pope Gregory dividing the city of Rome into thirty parishes and seven deaconries. The deaconries were the social service agencies of the city, each under the supervision of its deacon, who like the original seven of his order, had charge of the poor, the aged, the widows and the orphans. Cases were investigated, "histories" were compiled and the matricula, the forerunner of the modern card-index, was kept so that only those registered on this list received regular relief. In each district there was a hospital for the sick, for the distribution of food, and for the housing of foundlings. The sick were also visited in their own homes. All this is an instance of "how old the new."

It is the golden touch of the religious motive which transforms mere philanthropy into Christian charity. The history of the Church has been a story of her service for the material needs of the unfortunate. Modern social service can make small claims in the nature of discoveries. Much that is confidently supposed to be modern is often found to have been in operation in the Church centuries ago. Modern social work has, however, developed a technique which can well be combined with works of Christian charity. The supernatural influence of Christian charity may be infused into the technique of social service with the result of increased efficiency and no loss of religious motive.

One of the objects of conferences of Catholic agencies, doing organized social work, is precisely the working out of the combination of scientific methods in dealing with problems of relief and the age-old spirit of Christian charity which should make all our work for others a carrying out of the second great commandment of the law, that we love our neighbor as ourselves. Too much insistence may be laid upon mere methods; too great reverence may be given to the card-index; too much time may be spent on the compiling of records. At the same time, however, our own organizations for the relief of the poor and the otherwise handicapped cannot afford to disregard the scientific methods which have been developed in agencies for welfare work outside the Church.

Every activity of Catholic charity will do well to interest itself in the problems of this character, which are discussed at the annual meetings of the Conference of Catholic Charities.

## My Brother's Keeper

By "THE LOOKER-ON"

*Reprinted in part from the Boston "Pilot"*

IT used to be the fashion, not so long ago, for the people living in one neighborhood to know one another and to exchange friendly visits, visits of compassion, of benevolence. In our own mothers' day it was customary for neighbors to hasten to the aid of one another in time of sickness or stress. In those times trained helpers, those who made a profession of caring for the sick, were not so many as to-day, and the physician was forced to rely upon the intelligence and charity of kindly neighbors who, because the charity of Christ pressed them, hastened to offer their services in the home where the unfriendly visitor, illness or death, had stolen unawares.

In the event that death hovered near, this angel of mercy would strive to prepare the sick person and the members of the family for the visit of God's Angel. If carelessness or neglect of religion had unfortunately crept into the home, she would pave the way for the visit of the priest and for the Divine Consoler Whom he was privileged to bring to the dying one. Willingly and cheerfully she sacrificed her rest at night to remain beside the bed of the sufferer, putting her hand to any task that she found to do.

Social workers know of the grave need of neighborliness in the world to-day. They realize the appalling lack of understanding or sympathy or whatever else it may be on the part of the great majority of people. Side by side with one another, souls drift through life and never meet on any common ground. They pass out of life, unknown, misunderstood, with none to mourn their passage.

In your neighborhood perchance there is some sad and sorrowful soul, someone who has forgotten God. He

or she has drifted on like the flotsam and jetsam of the tide, and the swift current is bearing its victim farther out to sea as the days pass on. The priest does not even know of the existence of such a soul in his parish, for it is impossible, especially in a large city, for every zealous pastor to find out just who should belong to his flock. What a noble act it would be to pay a friendly visit to such a soul. Experience tells that, although at first there may be rebuff for the friendly visitor, eventually there is a welcome. Merely the touch of a compassionate hand, the soothing murmur of a kindly voice, and the wanderer is encouraged to pour forth all her woes into a truly sympathetic ear. Many a conversion has resulted from this beautiful apostolate of friendly visitation.

Have we no sense of duty in this regard? Long ago, two brothers wandered forth in the fields. And one of them, Cain, rose up against his brother, Abel, and slew him.

And the Lord said to Cain: "Where is thy brother, Abel?" And he answered: "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?"

And He said to him: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth."

In the midst of our search for pleasure, for the things of earth, for comforts in our homes, for the things that appeal to our sensibilities, let us not forget to bestow a little care, a little thought upon our neighbors' souls. Especially those whom we meet day by day, who live near us and whom we have reason to suspect are sorrowful or not at peace with God. This is our task, to gently lead them to peace and joy once more, and we may not shirk it. Otherwise we may expect to hear from the stern lips of God the awful question that once He addressed to the recreant Cain:

"Where is thy brother?"